

Physicians Hear Two-Hour Debate on Lung Cancer-Smoking Relationship

A Kennedy-Nixon type debate on lung cancer and its relation to smoking took place last night in Valley View County Hospital library, Wayne Township, before almost 150 physicians, members of the Passaic County Medical Society.

Dr. Ernest Wynder, chief of epidemiology, Memorial Hospital, New York City, tried to prove that lung cancer is caused by smoking; and Dr. Robert C. Hockett, associated scientific director, Tobacco Industry Research Committee, argued in favor of the opposite view.

The two-hour debate was kicked off before the large crowd, many of whom were puffing away on cigars and cigarettes, by Dr. Wynder.

Cites Examinations

Dr. Wynder announced smilingly that he did not smoke himself, but that this did not prejudice his views. He said that he had devoted 10 long years to the study of cause and effect between lung cancer and smoking, and that he had personally examined over 1,000 lung cancer patients.

He stated the following to be facts: 1. if a heavy smoker has a cough, and if he stops smoking, the cough usually goes away. 2. A group of Seventh Day Adventists in California, who do not smoke because of religious convictions, were examined and found to have practically no traces of lung cancer.

3. In Venice, Italy, where over 70 per cent of all persons who die in hospitals are autopsied, heavy smokers had a high incidence of lung cancer. 4. Radiologists were known (people who work with X-ray machines) to have a significant rate of leukemia, and thus they are protected with lead shields. But, there is less evidence to support this theory than the smoking-lung cancer theory.

Injecting a humorous note, Dr. Wynder said: "Science has tried to get animals to smoke, such as trained birds, but they refuse to learn." 5. The Public Health Service has banned certain food additives, without any evidence that they are harmful to humans; only because of laboratory tests on animals. Even the Surgeon General of the United States agrees that the mass of circumstances indicates that smoking is the cause of lung cancer in many

cases, and as a final note in his opening address, Dr. Wynder said, "Even many doctors in Russia agree with me."

In rebuttal, Dr. Hockett, a former associate professor of chemistry at M. I. T. stated, "I'm speaking for myself and not the tobacco industry. Our research committee, although founded by the tobacco industry, is not controlled by it. We are free to speak without any interference, and I hope that the medical profession will use the knowledge that our group unearths."

As an example of the industry's interest in getting at the true reason for lung cancer, he cited the fact that over \$4,000,000 has been given in grants to colleges, etc. for study purposes. "Seton Hall University received two such grants just recently," he pointed out.

Dr. Hockett used an analogy to show that if wrong conclusions are jumped at too quickly then the finding of a real cure for a disease may be delayed. "Years ago in Italy," he said, "people thought that malaria was caused by the poisonous fumes arising from the swamps. Now, if people wore masks or cloaks to protect themselves, the real cause, which is mosquitoes, might not have been discovered until much later than it was."

He said that masses of statistics and data, are not as good as "hunches" in the research laboratory. Data alone cannot find causes.

Ulcers were also studied by his group, Dr. Hockett said, and tobacco was found to have no effect on them. "In fact," he said, "in many cases, tobacco relaxed tension."

Dr. Hockett also cited the dangers of harmful ingredients in the air itself. "A man who smokes two packs of cigarettes a day, also inhales over 13,000 times more volume of air during the same 24 hours."

In the question and answer period which followed, at which time a decided absence of tobacco smoke in the packed library was noted, Dr. Wynder said, "Statistics do prove something. In a study of over 1,000 medical doctors, more than 45% over 35 years of age had stopped smoking, when acquainted with my facts."

Wynder claimed also that filter

cigarettes really do help chronic heavy smokers rid themselves of a cough.

Says No Proof

Dr. Hockett then made his closing remarks in answer to questions and stated that the tobacco industry is ready anytime to make safer cigarettes as soon as they know what properties to leave out. "Thus far, we do not know, and nobody else does either. We want to find the real cause of lung cancer, as much as anyone else does, but thus far, tobacco has not been proved conclusively to be the guilty agent."

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